

# Waste Management of Couran Cove Island Resort

Australia is facing the same waste problems as all other industrialised countries around the world. We are producing larger amounts of household, industrial and commercial rubbish and running out of places to put it. This problem has come about because of:

- Increase in population leading to the generation of more waste.
- Changing lifestyles and habits (ie. consuming and discarding materials).
- New technology and industries – resulting in new forms of waste.
- Land becoming scarce and valuable, particularly in urban areas, leading to a reluctance of using it for waste disposal.
- Recognition that some forms of waste can be re-used or recycled.

What we do with our waste is both an individual and global concern and Couran Cove Island Resort has taken the role of leadership in the management of waste. A great deal of emphasis has been placed on minimising the impact of human usage on the environment by utilising state of the art environmental management principles and effectively putting them into practice in the resort's operations.

## SEWAGE TREATMENT

When it comes to sewage disposal, the Couran Cove Island Resort has focused on world best practice standards in the collection, treatment and disposal of sewage waste, far beyond industry and government standards. The following processes have been put into place:

### Collection

The resort evaluated several options with regard to the collection of sewage, with the final decision resting with a process termed 'vacuum sewer'. This involves sewage being sucked from housing to central collection areas using shallow trenches as a means of transport. These shallow trenches have been incorporated in order to minimise the potential negative environmental impacts that would normally arise from the installation of conventional collection systems.

### Treatment

The treatment plant consists of four major components – primary, secondary, tertiary and then a final polishing process. This polishing process results in water that is fit for human consumption (potable).

Many sewage plants found in Australia's major cities only treat sewage to the secondary stage before disposal. Couran Cove Island Resort, however, was determined to set new industry standards in sewage treatment and was willing to go several steps further.

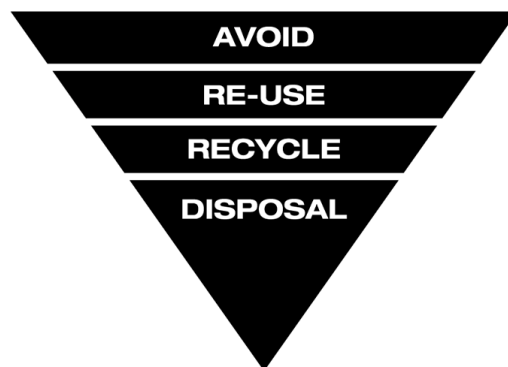
### Disposal

Treated effluent is stored and used for irrigation which maintains green fire breaks assisting in the management of potential fire hazards. In addition, there is a possibility that the by-products may also be sold to the mainland as fertiliser.

### Solid Waste Management

Based on the Waste Management Hierarchy, Couran Cove Island Resort will ensure that all facets of the resort's operations are subject to this concept.

## THE WASTE MANAGEMENT HIERARCHY



### Avoid

The avoidance of excess waste is the key component of any waste management program, by avoiding waste we ultimately decrease the amount needed for disposal. Couran Cove Island Resort is currently putting this into practice via a simple purchasing policy where many of our products are delivered in bulk.

### Re-use

Re-use is another essential component of the Waste Management Hierarchy, as it effectively extends the life of a product and once again decreases the amount of waste ending up in landfill. A great example of how Couran Cove Island Resort practices this is the re-use of organic waste that is produced on the island. Once collected, this organic waste is put through a vermiculture system (worm farm) and is then used as a soil conditioner and fertiliser.

### Recycle

Recycling has the potential to considerably decrease the amount of virgin materials that need to be utilised. Couran Cove Island Resort

has an extensive recycling program in place that ensures that all recyclable material is collected, sorted and shipped to the mainland for recycling.

### Disposal

The disposal of waste is the least desired component of the Waste Management Hierarchy. Unfortunately, modern society has not yet created a system where all our waste can be re-used or recycled. With this being the case, Couran Cove Island Resort must dispose of some waste to land fill, however, we are continually seeking alternatives and implementing programs that will result in the decrease of waste to land fill.

Waste is one of the major environmental impacts of modern society and Couran Cove Island Resort is setting a new standard for waste management. The resort is taking every effort to minimise the impacts of waste through incorporating the theory of the Waste Management Hierarchy in a practical application.

## Couran Cove Island Resort Waste Management Overview

